# WEST VIRGINIA LYRICS

GITTINGS

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# WEST VIRGINIA LYRICS

BY

JOHN G. GITTINGS.

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## WEST VIRGINIA

MONTANI SEMPER LIBERI.

'T is "God's Country," where the mountain wall,
Ever stays the wildest winds that blow;
Where majestic forest trees wave tall,
And dance their shadows on the sward below.

To the westward, thro' her Vale of Paradise,
Flow the stretches of the "beautiful river;"
And every prospect is a glad surprise,
Where Ohio's waves in the sunlight quiver!

Yes, "Semper liberi montani,"
And in all the wide world 'round,
Than thy mountain men—O Allegheny!
No sturdier race can e'er be found.

Here, rounded hills and intervales
Inclose vast treasures of coal and oil;
'T is a rugged land, but content prevails
Where abundance requites the farmer's toil.

Tho' I wander far from these hills to roam,
I can find no land my heart so fills;
And I turn again to the mountain home,
To its stately trees, and its sparkling rills.

In dreams, I can see the mountains blue—
As grand they stand, as they stood before!
And may this vision—so fair and true!
Rise on my sight when my dreams are o'er.

## SIEGE OF FORT HENRY*

WHEELING, VIRGINIA, SEPT. 11, 1782.

The shades of night fell on the forest land
And concealed the savage band,
And concealed the British band,
That assailed old Wheeling Fort.
But grim and stern they stood, rifle in hand,
The defenders of Wheeling Fort.

'T was here the Revolution's last stand
Was made for their fatherland
By the bold backwoods band;
And noble women did exhort
Men to duties stern, and to withstand
The fierce assault on the Fort.

Sad was their plight, and struggle all in vain,
Till brave Elizabeth Zane
Bore o'er the dangerous plain
The powder to the Fort:
Nor doth queenlier deed history's page enchain!
Than her rescue of the Fort.

Bravely did they protect the palisade,
And repelled the Renegade,
And repelled the British raid:
They, who stood at last resort,
Against ambuscade and savage serenade!
At the siege of Wheeling Fort.

*NOTE—At the siege of Fort Henry, Wheeling, Virginia, (now W. Va.) forty settlers defending the Fort were attacked by 300 savages, led by the Renegade, Simon Girty. The Indians were supported by a company of "Queen's Rangers," carrying the British flag, and

commanded by Captain Pratt. This is claimed to have been the last battle in which the British flag was unfurled in the war of the Revolution.

The men behind the palisades were hard pressed, yet they were greatly encouraged by their wives and daughters, who molded bullets and loaded the guns. After a time the powder became exhausted, when Elizabeth Zane, a pioneer girl of 18, performed the daring action alluded to in the verses. She ran to the blockhouse, forty yards distant, and tripped it back again, under the fire of the Indian guns, bearing in her apron a supply of powder--thus "rescuing the Fort."

## PINNICKINNICK

Over the "beautiful river" came,
Stalking the woods for human game,
An Indian chief with the sounding name—
Pinnickinnick.

His form so tall, his pose so free,
With moccasined foot and gartered knee,
A figure in bronze seem'd he—
Pinnickinnick.

Where deeds of blood were ever rife,
In border raid and feudal strife,
A ready hand with scalping knife—
Pinnickinnick.

At Wheeling siege he did stand,
The fiercest of the savage band,
And waved aloft his bloody hand!
Pinnickinnick.

While from 'brasure and from port,
The hurtling bullets hissed retort,
He waved defiance at the fort!
Pinnickinnick.

McCulloch had fallen beneath his dart,
And his savage hand had torn out his heart,
Which he did eat for his own part!
Pinnickinnick.

He ate the heart of the hero dead,
As his bold spirit had fled,
"To make him strong!" he said—
Pinnickinnick.

"McCulloch's Leap" on the mountain side,
Had stirred to envy his savage pride,
For he, too, like him would ride—
Pinnickinnick.

But where is now the warrior's band,
And with what purpose plann'd
Returns he 'lone to the forest land?
Pinnickinnick.

For, like a panther, he threads the brake,
Scarce above him doth the hazel shake;
Beneath his tread no sounds awake:
Pinnickinnick.

His eager steps run o'er the ground,
Following the trail like a hound,
Thro' the thicket, where'er it wound—
Pinnickinnick.

Now, up the hill with sturdy gait,
He strides along to his sure fate,
For at the top the foe await
Pinnickinnick.

Twenty savages, stark and grim,
Upon the mountain's topmost brim,
Painted warriors, wait for him—
Pinnickinnick.

Now he shall reap what he hath sown—
He, who pity hath never known,
He, who mercy hath never shown:
Pinnickinnick.

He paused at top to breathe a spell,
When up, there rose so wild a yell—
The Indian war-whoop! he knew it well!
Pinnickinnick.

With tomakawk and scalping knife
They close him 'round in deadly strife,
Till gaping wounds sluice out his life—
Pinnickinnick.

But oft he made the foe recoil,
Fighting like tiger in the toil,
While his own blood dyed the soil—
Pinnickinnick.

Thus he fell on a summer day,
Mortally wounded in the savage fray,
And as he fell he struggled to say:
"Pinnickinnick!"

The painted warriors heard the sound,
And then they came crowding, round,
Taunting the war-chief on the ground—
Pinnickinnick.

They scalp him there before he dies,
On that hill, up near the skies,
While he faintly, faintly cries—
"Pinnickinnick!"

* * * * *

His blood ran out, his heart grew still,
And he lay dead on the hill—
On the topmost point of that high hill—
Pinnickinnick.

There let him sleep where he did fall,
With the mantling forest over all,
Till the Great Spirit shall call:
"Pinnickinnick!"

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* "Pinnickinnick" is the Indian name for a high hill near Clarksburg, West Virginia. Its import is unknown.

## MARQUIS DE LAFAYETTE

'T is a story long since told,
And ne'er forgot should be,
How Lafayette, in morning prime,
To our rescue crossed the sea.

Departing from his own dear land,
From wife and home sailed he;
And with our fathers took his stand,
In the ranks of liberty.

Thro' weary years of cruel war,
In the desolated land,
His very name, it was a charm,
To our devoted band!

He proved a friend to Washington,
While envious hate prevailed;
For aye his heart was steadfast, true,
Tho' death itself assailed.

He brought to us from his own land
Of men of might and store,
De Kalb, the brave, and heroes bold
Who would return no more.

Their bones did moulder on the fields
Where heroes graves were made,
From Saratoga's stricken heights,
To the southern palm-tree shade.

No base ingratitude can harm
The memories of the free,
And brave, true hearts will warm
To France's fleur-de-lis!

And to him, who at Brandywine
With the Continentals bled,
And on many a field incarnadine
The gallant vanguard led!

## PERE LA CHAISE

### The Cemetery of Paris.

I read of France and her sons of glory,
Many a diverse, carven story,
While walking where the pathway winds
'Mid Pere la Chaise's marble shrines.

An antique tomb the gateway near,
Marks a spot to lovers dear,—
Where Eloise and Abelard repose;
Where Norman peasant weaves the rose.

Here, their ivory effigies abide,
Priest and nun, side by side;
They, who in that distant day
Moved all hearts with their sad lay.

Here, too, in sight of Napoleon's grave,
Rests the "bravest of the brave"—
Storm King! when war's waves did break,
Borodino's thunders cannot wake!

O Ney! where are thy legions of war,
That smote the Nations in ranks afar!
And art thou sleeping here in gloom,
Without a monument, without a tomb?

Fair Science! thy sons who read of yore
What God hath writ, now read no more!—
La Place and gifted Cuvier,
Here await the summons of the Judgment day!

And now we would view, before we go,
Where rest the astronomer, Arago,
And Berenger, the sweet singer—
Oh, would we had the day to linger!

For on embossed tomb here's many a name
Familiar afar, to the echo of fame;
In the silence of death—the gay city round—
These men of glory sleep, profound.

## SONS OF THE REVOLUTION

Let us remember the deeds our grandsires wrought;
Their struggles thro' privation, hunger and cold;
When in Freedom's cause they fought,
"In the days that tried men's souls,"
On this, our Virginia border-land,
Where the tomahawk and scalping-knife,
With the red hosts of England's band,
Joined in the stern, unequal strife—
Our grandsires made as bold a stand
As ever did men for native land!

## PUBLIC SCHOOLS

"Education is a better safeguard of liberty than a standing army."
—EDWARD EVERETT.

The school houses are in all our land,
On hill, in plain, or mountain glen;
These beacon sentinels of freedom stand
A bulwark, stronger than armed men.

Their lights beyond home-haven shine,
And pilot youth who devious roam;
There dearest direction, almost divine,
To love of country, honor, home.

A land thus guided shall abide for aye!
Her champion spring from mother earth;
And, like Antæus in the olden day,
At every touch, new strength has birth!

## ONWARD HO!

A good old bark had sailed the sea
Thro' many a long, long year;
And every voyage that ship sailed on,
To her mariners brought cheer.
Tho' guiding by the northern star,
Or the southern cross aflame,
She ever bore on her rugged prow,
The bold, stirring name—
"Onward Ho!"

She sailed on, thro' the frozen zone
And the channel's tortuous way;
Where plunging icebergs crunch and roll,
And the seal and the narwhal play.
She loomed up, off the tropic isles,
And cheered the weary strand;
For, gleaming at her battered peak,
She wore the legend grand—
"Onward Ho!"

She luffed her stem 'gainst every gale
That swept the unknown sea,
And, bore up from the misty main,
In the harbor, she would be.
Her captain was of mariner's skill,
And of the seacraft proud;
He knew to pilot the trackless way,
And his voice rang trumpet-loud—
"Onward Ho!"

## SANTIAGO

### The Destruction of the Oquendo.

"Don't cheer, men, they're dying,"
Captain Philip of the Texas said,
As the Oquendo's flag was shot to the deck,
Where the Spanish seamen bled.
Oh, words of the gentlest courtesy!
They'll live when the years have sped.

They'll live when words of sterner command
Have passed with their deeds away,
For there abideth not in the heart of man
A feeling of loftier sway
Than the tender pity of Valor's sons
For the victims of the fray.

Oh, never in the roar and crash of war!
Where the Stars and Stripes were flying,
Has a grander slogan stirred the ranks—
'Mid deeds death-defying—
Than the noble words of the sailor brave:
"Don't cheer, men, they're dying!"

## ROUGH RIDERS

At Las Guasimas, where bullets fell
Thick and fast from the chapparal,
The Cowboy of the wild West
Charged, with the Clubman at his best;
The Yankee of the northern pine,
With the swart Southron, were in line.
Rivals now in soldier might,
Right on they press, up the height.
God of battles! Be their guide:
They are brothers, whate'er betide.
Such chains of valor in the woof
Of line and descent, need no proof,
Nor of the strains of Blue or Gray—
They are all comrades from this day.

## ESMERALDA

From North Carolina's mountains blue,
Till where the pines look on the sea—
O Esmeralda, fair and true!
There's none so fair, it seems to me.
Then hail! to the charm of beauty's grace,
And honor to the leal, anear and far,
In the humble home by the woodland-trace,
Or, mid dazzling scenes on the gay Boulevard!

## IN MEMORIAM

In this the Advent of that blessed day,
Wherein, on earth, the Saviour of men was born,
Another gentle school-girl is called away,
And leaves young hearts all sad and forlorn.
God's pity tempers the sadness of those that grieve,
Or else the tears of childhood would congeal
On Sorrow's cheek, and hope would ne'er relieve
The heavy burdens that kindred hearts conceal.
The tender flower ever fades in the wintry blast;
The delicate bud blooms alway on a summer's day;
The gem shines forever in ocean caves;
And the Creator's decrees perfected be, at last,
When Buds and Blossoms of Humanity in bright
array,
Arise with Kindreds and Nations from their graves.

## AN ARTIST'S DREAM OF BEAUTY

O winsome girl of a queenly grace!
O the magic charm of a comely face!
As the pale prisoner in dungeon walls,
Wistfully turns where the checkered light falls—
So fain would I turn to thy blue eye's glory,
And forget all sorrow in the old, old story!

## THE LITERARY CONTEST

When youth and maiden in ranks are seen,
In literature's array;
Oh, hard the task to judge, I ween,
Of all their classic sway;
First "Perseverance" leads to light,
Through many darksome ways;
Then thoughtful "Worth While," clear and bright,
Bears friendship's fragrant bays.
Which shall win?

Shall "Brier Rose" so free and fair,
In her witchery outvie;
Or 'mid the torrent's icy glare,
There for her loved to die?
Or may it be, "Queen Mary" calls,
In all her radiance rare;
Or doth she sit in Fotheringay halls,
In her last, lone despair?
Which shall win?

Now "Patriotism" must ne'er fail,
Nor oratory's fires;
Not while we have our "Nathan Hale,"
And all our glorious sires!
But here comes "What Career" to show,
In resonant tones and true,
How each one in this world, you know,
Must paddle his own canoe.
Which shall win?

The champion for "Debate" now come,
Primed for the mortal fray;
As gladiators in ancient Rome,
All on a festal day.
And for "Humanity" we face alarms,
Upon the land and sea;
Or else, we stand for peaceful charms,
In the home of liberty.
Which shall win?

When each and all their parts have played,
And the curtain has rung down;
The judges then, all stand dismayed,
For who shall wear the crown?
And must selection now be made
Where each has done so well?
Then this must be our mark and grade,
For these weavers of the spell—
All have won!

## QUEEN VICTORIA

Sad tidings o'er the sea are borne
The saddest in the Century sped,
And leal hearts long will mourn—
"The Good Queen is dead!"

In Royal power she was serene,
With womanly virtue aye sublime,
And as Mother, Wife and Queen—
The noblest in her lineage line.

## LINES ON A SCHOOL GIRL

Oh gentle school girl!
With a glance of merry light,
Tripping but timidly
In the early morning bright.

While your own merry face
Is the mirror of your soul,
Its charm of dimpled grace
The angels control!

May the full sunshine
Make for you a vista, gleam,
As fair as ever gladdened
The heart, in song or dream!

## THE TOURNAMENT

Now knighthood is in flower
And I love a maiden rare,
I long for that good hour
When the Tourney I shall dare.

When the Tourney I shall dare
And with my lance in rest,
I'll prove to the world, she's fair,
And the sweetest, and the best!

And if ever a knight says, "Nay,"
He shall eat his words or fall!
For I'll ride in the lists that day,
At the blast of the bugle call!

I'll ride for the sake of love,
And not for rank or gold,
And her sweet beauty I'll prove,
Or I'll sleep with the knights of old!

I'll crown her bright hair,
With the gleaming laurel wreath,
And she shall sit in the chair;
With all the maids beneath!

For she shall be our queen—
The radiant and the rare!
With her proud, stately mien—
The fairest of the fair!

## WEDDING RINGS

O roguish Cupid, with angel wings,
Wafting true lovers on the Romance sea!
Now anchor them fast with wedding rings,
In the haven fair of Hymenee!

## "STONEWALL" JACKSON

"Jackson stands there, like a stone wall," he said,
As he pointed his sword across the battlefield;
Thus the name—none prouder on spotless shield
Than "Stonewall," the sobriquet to valor paid.
'T was ever thus where heroes have drawn the blade;
The gentle were the daring when dangers appealed,
And Jackson the devout, the lion-heart revealed,
As he stood at Manassas with his old brigade!
He wrote with the sword in rude columns of war,
And the trace he made may grow dim on the scroll
Of time, as the generations rise and fall;
Yet the memories of heroic deeds reach afar,
And with the noble and the true on honor's roll,
"Stonewall" will abide till the last call.

## SUGAR MAPLE

There's a grandeur in the gnarled oak,
And ever a grace in the swaying pine;
But the sugar maple, on hill and rock,
Holds in its bower beauty's shrine.

All nature loves its glossy green,
The coolest shade of woodland grove;
And beneath its panoply's screen,
Rare songsters pipe of love.

Up and down its lichened bole
Nut-hatches and busy warblers run,
While chipmunk, in playful role,
Chirk and chatter below, in fun.

The bright oriole's chime out-floats
From its veil of leafy wall,
And the tinkle of woodthrush notes,
Like silver bells, at sunset call.

What time the flowers fade in frost,
A halo encircles the sugar tree;
Its foliage aflame, in the wind is toss'd,
A glorious object in nature to see!

Its tints of red, from brown to maroon,
With purple and bronze of its royal gown,
Agleam with yellow and orange, eftsoon,—
Surpass in splendor a kingly crown!

## DEATH OF THE TEACHER

Grim death hath stricken the teacher at his desk;
His countenance so earnest, we shall see no more;
Nor shall his approving smile reward our task,
When each day's labor shall be finished and o'er.
His task was finished ere his noon of life,
And silently his spirit, to the distant shore,
Hath winged its flight from this world of strife,
And left us on the strand, sadder than before.
He played his part like soldier to duty bound,
A manly part it was, so free from guile,
That gentle ones shall long bespeak him well,
When, as children grown, they gather round
And recount the happy days that were erstwhile:
True teacher and friend, a long, long farewell!

## SONNET

The idler drifts, the sport of every wind,
As wreckage on the current of the sea;
And lies at last, awaste under the lee,
With the beacon light of hope left behind.
Who labors not with hand nor yet with mind,
In the work-day world of God, cannot be free;
This, the law Divine—bow thou the knee,
And accept the burden that rests on all mankind.
The Toiler is Sovereign of the earth—
Heir to long ages of Thought's endeavor—
Chief in the pageant since Creation's birth—
Who lives, loves and dies—Conqueror!
Nobility in man is in the thought of his brain;
He rises no higher, and pomp and pretense are vain .

## THE "COLONEL"

A kindly man hath gone to his rest,
Companion meet—all men declare—
For the grave or gay, or the rich or poor,
His charity—so debonair!

This "touch of nature" made him great,
Brother to all the sons of men
Whose afflictions, sorrows, burdens, care,
Invoked his sympathetic ken.

With worldly men he was au fait,
With laugh and jest, and keen satire;
But the politician's rare insight
Would foil the wily—who'd conspire!

My verse's theme is a nobler part,
Than worldly honors or sordid pelf,
For Charity—sweet Nature's flower!
Ne'er blooms for men wrapp'd all in self.

But where the "Colonel" sleeps so well,
In this, the land of his pride and love,
Humble men shall pause by the grave
And call down blessings from above.

And the years of time shall circle away,
While the rivers flow on to the sea;
But these rock-ribbed hills will stand
Forever, his monument to be!

## EXILE OF IRELAND

Did you sail from the shore
Of the shamrock-emblem land?
Where the fragrance of peat-smoke
Floats o'er the strand?
"Yes, from that land I wander,
O'er the world to roam,
But my heart-beat marks each step
That leads from the dear old home:—

"That leads from the cot by the sea,
On the cliff where curlews call—
It rises on memory now—
Grand as castle-hall!
For there Norah waved farewell
And gentle Kathleen, too—
Oh, sad day! I left Kinsale,
For my heart is there with you!

"In dreams, I linger there,
On that pleasant shore,
And could I return again,
I'd wander no more—
For I love the Green-Isle!
And her shamrock-emblem, too,
And the Promontory grand,
Where friends were warm and true!

"I've wandered far away,
And my hopes are wont to fail,
Yet, I would rejoice now,
Could I look on Kinsale!
Could I see old Kinsale
And hear her vesper bell,
Where Kathleen and Norah
Waved their sad farewell!"

L. of C.

## THE QUAINT PHILOSOPHER

I've sat in the old shop many a day,
While the quaint old man worked away;
And he'd turn his last with many a tap,
As he gave life's foibles many a rap!

For an honest man and a true was he—
And he'd discern all sophistry!
In words of dissent, quaint and strong,
He'd speak against oppression's wrong.

And ever he'd plead the poor man's cause,
Yielding no jot to the world's applause!
No specious words could deceive his mind,
For his penetration the false would find.

And the false would fade before his gaze
As the mists of the morn the sun doth raise;
Thro' his grasp of life and worldly ken,
He'd charity for all kinds of men.

And the dissolute or the dutiful—
In recreant paths, or the beautiful—
All to him were the children of time,
To wither and fall, in winter's rime!
* * * * *
Oh, mystery in life!—God knows best!
Why the ceaseless march at His behest,
Of all kindreds and nations—crowd the way—
Down through the gates—ever and aye!
* * * * *
But the noblest thing that one shall find
To perish from earth—is an honest mind!

## SONG SPARROW

The burden of a song, all joy,
Borne through the wintry rain;
Oh, whence the lay without alloy!
Oh, whence the sweet refrain!

The gaudy songsters all have flown
Down by the Tropic sea;
And a homely bird in the storm, alone,
Cheers the day with his glee;
Cheers the day with his merry glee,
A-singing on the tree.

The melody of his song, all joy,
Trills through the wintry rain;
Oh, hark to his lay without alloy!
Oh, hark to his sweet refrain!

The song sparrow's trill on the wind is driven
Through the winter dark and long;
He gladdens the day as a gleam from heaven,
And cheers our hearts with his song;
And cheers our hearts with his merry song,
A-singing his merry song.

## IT MIGHT HAVE BEEN

The fairest hopes of lovelit dreams
May e'en elude a lover's grasp,
As a golden sunset's roseate beams
Escape an infant's dimpled clasp.

## THE OLD BLOCKHOUSE OF PITTSBURG

The old Blockhouse—"tear it down?"
Not for the honor of the town!
Why, 'twas built by Col. Boquet,
And sheltered on many a day,
Mother and child when arrows fell,
And the woods rang to the savage yell!
And now it stands, with rent and scar,
A relic of the Indian war.

Col. Boquet! what memories rise!
'T was he the savages did surprise,
Setting the poor captives free,
Restoring child to mother's knee,
And when a maiden, her dame knew not,
(So long a captive, she had forgot.)
* * * * *
"Sing the song you used to sing,"
Said Col. Boquet, "and that will bring
Her memory back to childhood days
And happy hour of childhood plays!"

The mother sang with tender grace,
A light broke on the wild child's face,
And through association's power,
She was reclaimed in that glad hour!
* * * * *
Now tear the old Blockhouse away?
And what association, pray,
Can recall where our Grandsires wrought,
When in freedom's cause they fought?

---

*NOTE. Withers, the historian, says: "Col. Boquet, through his superior knowledge of human nature, suggested to the mother—when the child could not recognize her—that she sing a song of her childish days—with the result, that the savage girl listened eagerly—then burst into tears, and rushed to her mother's arms!"

## OUR LOST LEADER

Our noble leader dies—
No surgeon can restore him—
And to hide all tearful eyes,
The shades of night close o'er him.
In the gloom of that sad night
As they gather round his bed—
"Good-bye, all—
It's God's way," he said.

"Nearer my God to Thee,
His will, not ours, be done."
And his noble spirit is free—
Our leader's work is done.
Oh, list to the martyr, all!
For he knows how to die—
"It's God's way—His plan—
All, good-bye!"

Thus, his kindly Light led on,
Amid the encircling gloom,
To the Cross that Christ bled on,
To the silence of the tomb!
And Nation's flags are lowered,
To show how they do feel;
And how grandly he is dowered—
The Nations with us kneel!

Bravely, too, she's striven—
His gentle wife, so ill—
To her sad comfort is given:
"It is God's will."
Thus his kindly Light led on,

Amid the encircling gloom,
To the Cross that Christ bled on,
To the silence of the tomb!

And Nation's flags are lowered,
To show how they do feel;
And how grandly he is dowered—
The Nations with us kneel
While he lay dying,
And tears bedim all eyes,
And the night winds are sighing
His requiem to the skies!

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